

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS ZAGREB 004591

SIPDIS

USIA FOR EEN (DOCAL) AND R (MCINTOSH)
DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/SCE AND PA
USVIENNA FOR USDEL OSCE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [HR](#) [SR](#)

SUBJECT: COVERAGE OF EASTERN SLAVONIA BASIC AGREEMENT
IN CROATIAN MEDIA -- REFLECTING THE AMERICAN VIEW

1. BECAUSE OF SOME SKEPTICISM WITHIN THE CROATIAN MEDIA
AND PUBLIC OVER THE BASIC AGREEMENT ON EASTERN SLAVONIA,
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 ZAGREB 04591 161634Z
WE INVITED FOUR COLUMNISTS FROM CROATIA'S MAIN
NEWSPAPERS FOR A SESSION WITH AMBASSADOR GALBRAITH IN
THE HOPES OF GETTING OUR VIEWS OUT. THE FIRST FRUITS OF
THIS DISCUSSION APPEARED TODAY (NOVEMBER 16) IN ONE OF
THOSE PAPERS, VECERNJI LIST, UNDER THE HEADLINE
"SKELETON WITHOUT THE FLESH: AMERICA'S VIEW OF THE
AGREEMENT ON EASTERN SLAVONIA."

2. FOLLOWING ARE SIGNIFICANT EXCERPTS FROM THAT COLUMN,
BY FOREIGN AFFAIRS WRITER MARINA SERIC:

(BEGIN TEXT)

THE BASICS OF THE AGREEMENT ON EASTERN SLAVONIA CAN BE
UNDERSTOOD TO BE A SKELETON TO WHICH THE "FLESH" STILL NEEDS
TO BE ATTACHED. IT IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR EVERYTHING TO GO
SMOOTHLY, FOR THOSE WHO ARE ALREADY (LIVING) THERE TO STAY
AND FOR THOSE WHO WERE EXPELLED TO RETURN, AND FOR (EASTERN
SLAVONIA) TO BE A MULTI-ETHNIC COMMUNITY AGAIN. THE
TRANSITIONAL AUTHORITY WILL BE A NEUTRAL FORCE THAT WILL BE
RESPONSIBLE FOR ATTACHING THE FLESH TO THE SKELETON AND FOR
EVERYTHING GOING SMOOTHLY. THIS COULD SUMMARIZE THE
THOUGHTS ON THE BASIC AGREEMENT ABOUT EASTERN SLAVONIA FROM
THE MOUTH OF THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR PETER GALBRAITH. . . .

"THIS IS THE PLACE WHERE THE WAR BEGAN. THEREFORE, IT IS
LOGICAL THAT ITS END BEGIN THERE. THAT REGION NEEDS TO
REMAIN A MULTI-ETHNIC COMMUNITY. THIS AGREEMENT IS A BASIS
FOR THE INITIATIVES OF BOTH SIDES, WHICH IS IMPORTANT FOR
ITS REALIZATION. THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD EXISTS BECAUSE IT
IS NECESSARY FOR THE PRESENT LOCAL POPULATION TO PREPARE
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 ZAGREB 04591 161634Z
ITSELF FOR NORMAL LIFE WITHIN CROATIA," EXPLAINS GALBRAITH.

THE U.S. HAS APPROACHED THIS PROBLEM FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF
ITS OWN MULTI-ETHNICITY. THEREFORE ONE OF THE BASIC IDEAS IS
THAT AN AREA THAT USED TO BE MULTI-ETHNIC IN THE PAST REMAIN
MULTI-ETHNIC IN THE FUTURE. "THERE IS STILL THE POSSIBILITY
HERE FOR THOSE WHO ARE THERE TO REMAIN, AT THE SAME TIME FOR
THOSE WHO WERE EXPELLED TO RETURN, AND FOR THE
REESTABLISHMENT OF CONFIDENCE BETWEEN THESE PEOPLES. THAT
WOULD BE AN EXCELLENT EXAMPLE FOR BOSNIA," CLAIMS GALBRAITH,
WHO IS CONVINCED THAT THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY THAT THE
AGREEMENT WILL FALL APART AND (WHO) BELIEVES THAT IT IS IN
THE INTERESTS OF ALL THAT THE TRANSITION PERIOD "PASS
SMOOTHLY, WITHOUT A MASSIVE EXODUS OF THE SERB POPULATION
AND WITHOUT INCITING NEW EMOTIONS FOR WAR."

HE ALSO CONSIDERS THIS AGREEMENT TO BE A SIGN OF THE
MATURITY OF THE SERB NEGOTIATING TEAM, WHICH, UNLIKE THE
KNIN LEADERSHIP, UNDERSTOOD THAT THEY WERE IN A DIFFICULT
SITUATION. (SERB DELEGATION HEAD) MILAN MILANOVIC WAS
DESCRIBED AS AN INFLUENTIAL MAN WHO OPERATED IN THE
BACKGROUND. "THERE WEREN'T ANY ARGUMENTS WITHIN THE SERB
DELEGATION, AS THERE WERE IN KNIN, WHOSE LEADERSHIP SHOWED
ITSELF TO BE TOTALLY IRRESPONSIBLE. THESE (PEOPLE) HAVE
LEARNED SOMETHING AND ACCEPTED RESPONSIBILITY. GREAT CREDIT
MUST GO TO (CROATIAN DELEGATION CHIEF HRVOJE) SARINIC AND
HIS TEAM. IT WAS A MATTER OF INTELLIGENT AND ELEGANT

COMPROMISES," CONCLUDED THE AMBASSADOR.

ASKED WHETHER THIS AGREEMENT AND THE ONE BETWEEN PRESIDENTS
TUDJMAN AND IZETBEGOVIC IN DAYTON WERE ONLY MASKS FOR THE
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 ZAGREB 04591 161634Z
(LACK OF) SUCCESS OF NEGOTIATIONS ON BOSNIA-HERCEGOVINA,
GALBRAITH SAID THAT IT IS ACTUALLY THE OPPOSITE, THAT THESE
SUCCESSES ARE SIGNS OF RESOLVE TO FIND A SOLUTION, AND THAT
"THE QUESTION OF BOSNIA-HERCEGOVINA CANNOT BE SOLVED BEFORE
THE QUESTION OF CROATIA IS SOLVED."
THE LIFTING OF THE OTHER "WALL" -- SANCTIONS ON SERBIA --
BEHIND WHICH LIES THE POSSIBILITY OF SERBIA'S ACCEPTANCE
INTO EUROPEAN AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, WILL BE
TIED TO RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, INCLUDING THE PROBLEM OF
KOSOVO, AND TO COOPERATION WITH THE INTERNATIONAL WAR CRIMES
TRIBUNAL IN THE HAGUE. IT MUST NOT BE FORGOTTEN THAT
SIMILAR CONDITIONS APPLY ALSO FOR CROATIA.

(END TEXT)

DAVIDSON

UNCLASSIFIED

NNNN